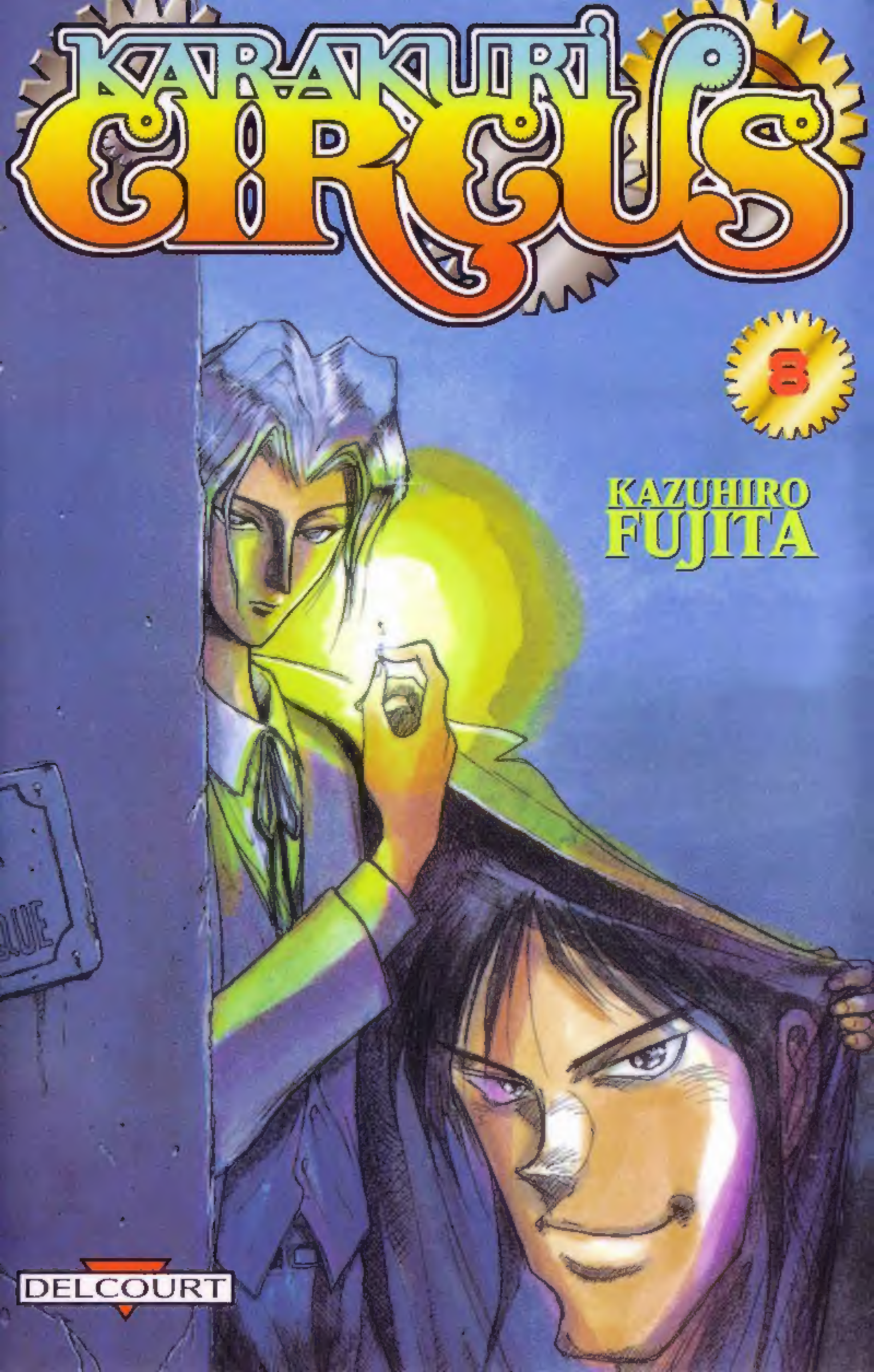
BLACKOUT

KARAKURI CIRCUS

8

KAZUHIRO FUJITA



DELCOURT

KARAKURI CIRCUS

8

DE

KAZUHIRO FUJITA

★ SUMMARY OF THE PREVIOUS VOLUMES ★

MASARU SAIGA AND SHIROGANE CONTINUE THEIR JOURNEY IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY CONFLICT WITH THE SAIGA FAMILY WHO'S STILL TRYING TO GET THE MONEY MASARU INHERITED. MEANWHILE, MASARU TOOK PART IN THE NAKAMACHI CIRCUS STREET SHOW, WHICH WAS PERFORMED WITHOUT MARQUEE AND WITH ALMOST NO EQUIPMENT. MOREOVER, THE NAKAMACHI HAD TO COPE WITH ALL THE TRAPS SET BY THE MITSU'USHI DURING THEIR SHOW. FORTUNATELY, MASARU'S INGENUITY PREVAILED AND THEIR PERFORMANCE WAS A BIG SUCCESS. THE NAKAMACHI COULD THEN MOVE FORWARD AND HOPE FOR THE RESURRECTION OF THEIR CIRCUS.

NARUMI KATO, WHO HAD SAVED MASARU AT THE KARUIZAWA BATTLE AND HAD THUS GOTTEN BADLY WOUNDED, MIRACULOUSLY CAME BACK TO LIFE. HOWEVER, HE'S NOW IN FRANCE AND SEEMS TO HAVE LOST ALL HIS MEMORIES OF THE PAST EVENTS. GUY, A MAN PRETENDING TO BE A DOCTOR, CLAIMS HE'S THE ONE WHO SAVED NARUMI. IN FACT, HE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO REALLY KNOWS THE TRUTH. GUY BELONGS TO A SECRET ORGANIZATION OF IMMORTALS CALLED "SHIROGANE" WHOSE PURPOSE IS TO FIGHT AGAINST EVIL AUTOMATONS. HE'S NOW ABOUT TO REVEAL THE SECRET OF THE "AQUA VITAE," THE WATER THAT ENABLED HIM TO BRING NARUMI BACK TO LIFE...

KARAKURI CIRCUS VOLUME 8

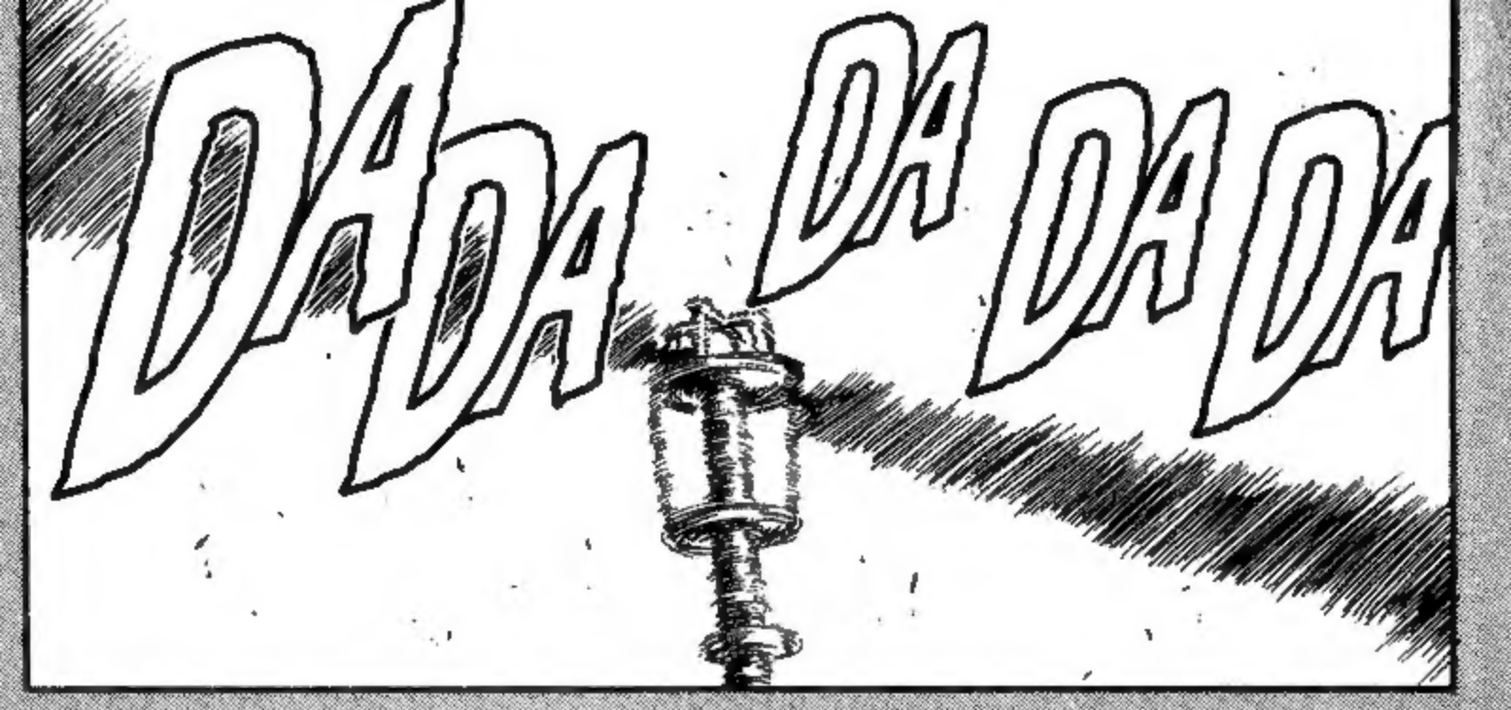
INDEX

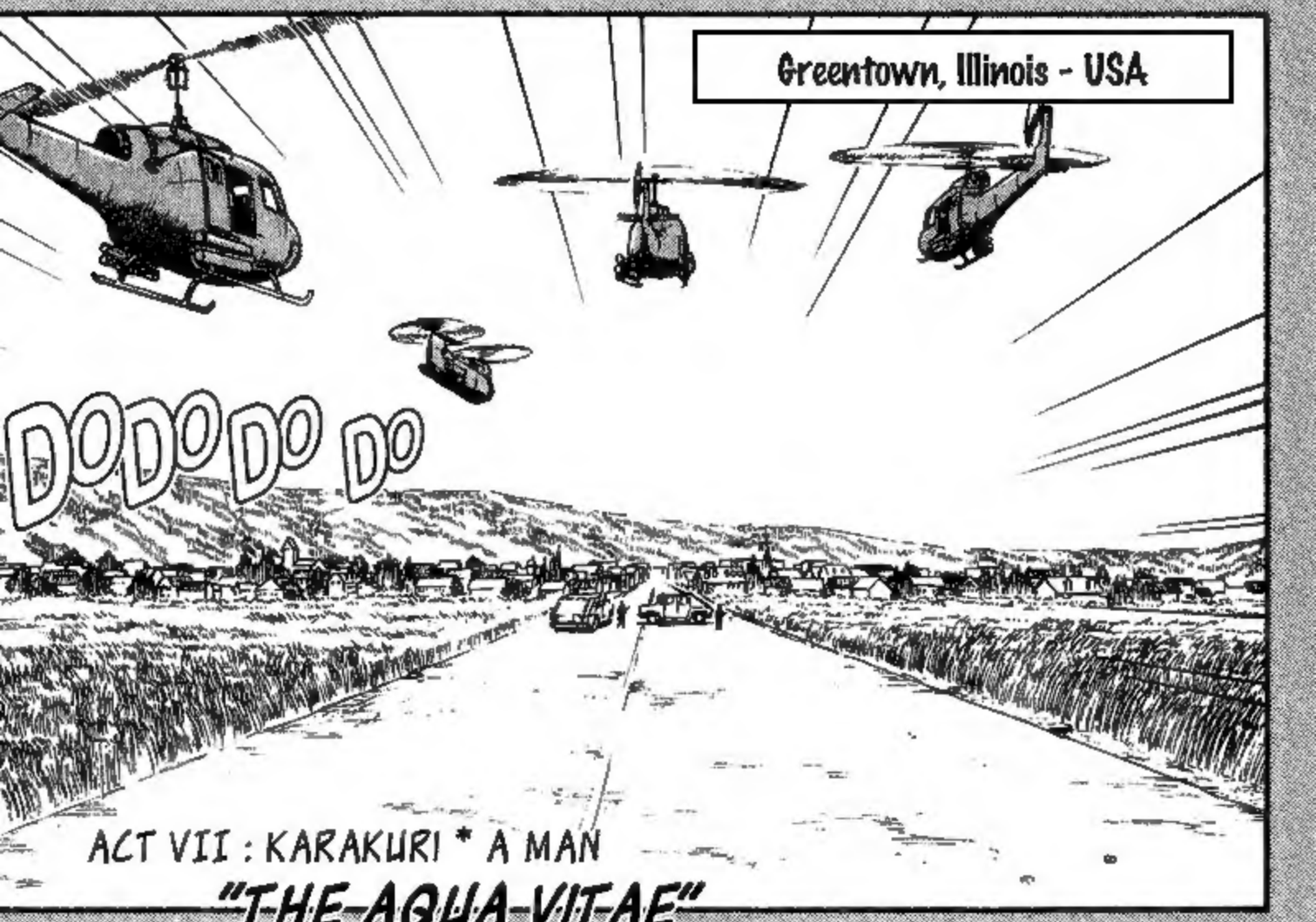
ACT VII (CONTINUED)

KARAKURI * A MAN "THE AQUA VITAE"	**3**
KARAKURI * A MAN "THOSE WHO BECAME SHIROGANE"	**21**
KARAKURI * A MAN "THE MECHANICAL VAMPIRES"	**39**
KARAKURI * A MAN "A FIGHTING MAN"	**57**
KARAKURI * A MAN "THE WIND AND THE LIGHT"	**75**
KARAKURI * A MAN "THE FIGHT AGAINST FLAVIO"	**93**
KARAKURI * A MAN "SCREAMS"	**111**
KARAKURI * A MAN "BLOOD"	**129**
KARAKURI * A MAN "THE CURTAIN GOES DOWN"	**147**

ACT VIII

KARAKURI * MACHINERY "THE SHIROGANE VILLAGE"	**165**





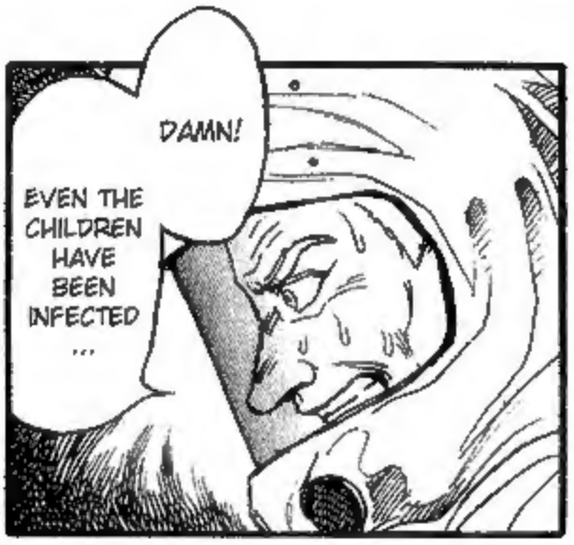
ACT VII : KARAKURI * A MAN

"THE AQUA VITAE"

...WHAT?!
YES.
THE INFECTION HASN'T SPARED ANYONE IN GREENTOWN.

TAN
TAN
TAN

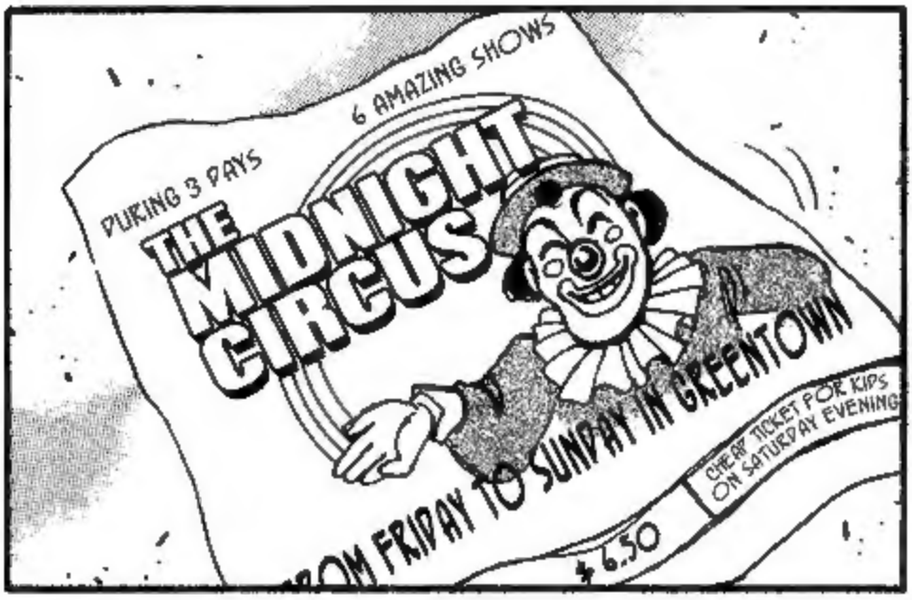
GHH
HW!
GHH
HW!
GHH


DAMN!
EVEN THE CHILDREN HAVE BEEN INFECTED ...

I CAN'T FIGURE IT OUT. HOW CAN NINE THOUSAND PEOPLE BE INFECTED IN ONE SINGLE NIGHT...
BY THE SAME DISEASE...?
HOW'S THIS POSSIBLE?!
BUT...
DOCTOR... I'VE BEEN WORKING FOR EIGHT YEARS IN THE BACTERIOLOGY SPECIAL UNIT,

WE'RE DEALING WITH ZONAPHA'S SYNDROME.

IT OCCURS WHEN YOUR VITAL SYSTEMS ACKNOWLEDGE THE SUPERI-ORITY...
...OF THE PARA-SYMPATHIC NERVES OF SOMEONE ELSE.



ACT VII : KARAKURI * A MAN

"THE AQUA VITAE"

VHHH H...

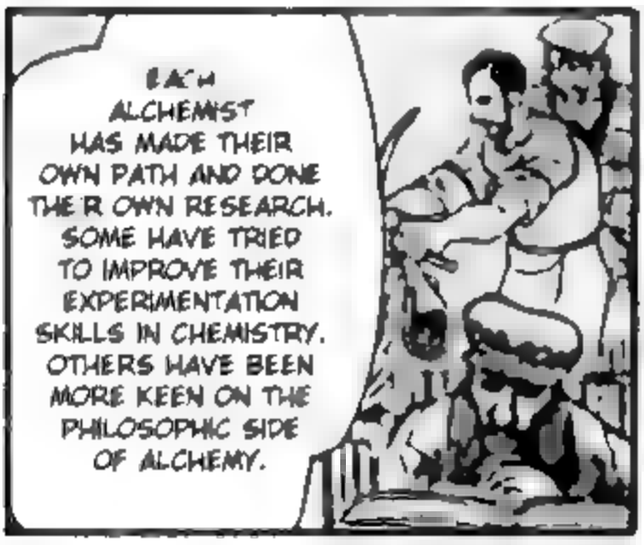
Quiberon - France

HOW IGNORANT !!
HAPPINESS SHOULDN'T SHINE ON SUCH A USELESS, SIMPLE-MINDED MAN!!
HM?!
AL... CHE... NOPE, NEVER HEARD OF IT!
BLOOD!
STOP PRETENDING! TELL ME MORE ABOUT THAT THING INSTEAD!
...I'M VERY SICK!
HEUH
HEUH
WHAT'S UP WITH YOU?!
ONE OF ITS PURPOSES IS TO MAKE PURE GOLD OUT OF SIMPLE METAL!
IT'S AN EMPIRICAL SCIENCE THAT AIMS TO ACHIEVE THE "ULTIMATE TRANSFORMATION."
ALCHEMY'S A SCIENCE OF DARKNESS...
...THAT INVOLVES "TRANSMUTATION" TECHNIQUES.

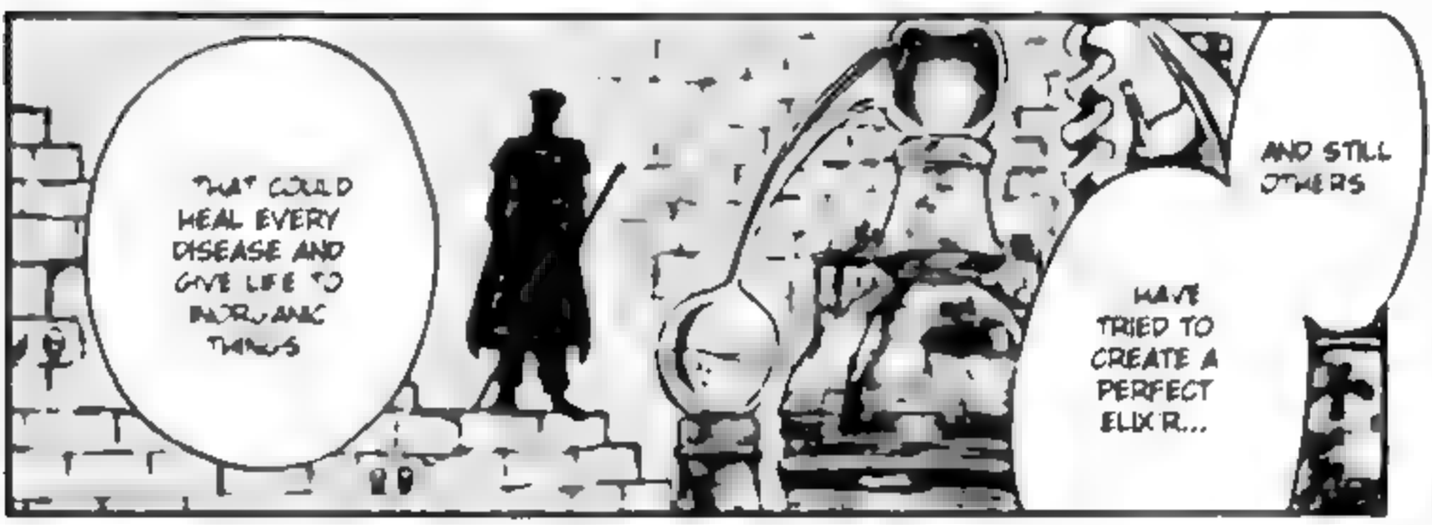
HA HA HA! MAKE GOLD OUT OF IRON OR COPPER?! SO IT'S A SCIENCE MADE BY STINGY PEOPLE FOR STINGY PEOPLE!!
PLOC
THAT IS NOT THE SOLE PURPOSE OF ALCHEMY.
THE TRUE GOAL OF ALCHEMY IS TO FIND THE "ULTIMATE TRUTH."
IT IS SAID THAT WHILE TRYING TO OBTAIN THE SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NEEDED TO CREATE GOLD...
.A MAN CAN ALSO POLISH HIS MIND.
BY SHARPENING HIS MIND AND BODY, HE MIGHT ACHIEVE AND UNDERSTAND "TRUTH."
WOOOW! SOUNDS LIKE THE NONSENSE YOU CAN HEAR IN ALL THE SECTS THAT ARE HAVING A LOT OF SUCCESS THESE DAYS!
DON'T BE SILLY!! THE ART OF ALCHEMY IS NOTHING RECENT!!
EXPERIMENTS HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT BY GREAT ALCHEMISTS FOR MORE THAN 2000 YEARS! IN THE EAST, IN THE WEST... EVERYWHERE, IN FACT!!

...AND EVEN THEOLOGY!!
BUT ALCHEMY IS UNIQUE!
...IT'S A TRANSCENDENTAL SCIENCE THAT USES PHYSICS, PHARMACEUTICS, CHEMISTRY, PHILOSOPHY...

NOWADAYS ALCHEMY'S STILL CONSIDERED TO BE A PRIMITIVE AND ECCENTRIC SCIENCE THAT HAS BEEN TRYING TO ACHIEVE THE IMPOSSIBLE.

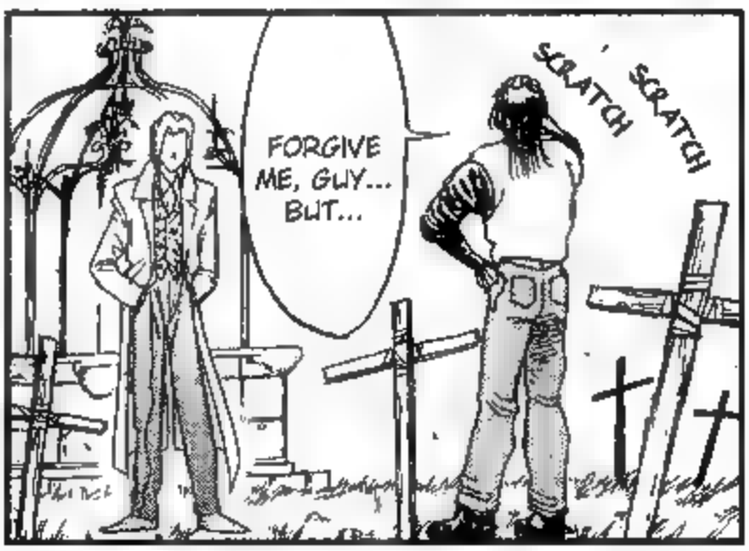

EACH ALCHEMIST HAS MADE THEIR OWN PATH AND DONE THEIR OWN RESEARCH. SOME HAVE TRIED TO IMPROVE THEIR EXPERIMENTATION SKILLS IN CHEMISTRY. OTHERS HAVE BEEN MORE KEEN ON THE PHILOSOPHIC SIDE OF ALCHEMY.

IT'S TRUE THAT SOME ALCHEMISTS ARE CROOKS
BUT THERE ARE OTHERS WHO AREN'T
ALL THAT STUFF SEEMS FISHY I BET
THERE'S SOME KIND OF SWINDLING GOING ON!

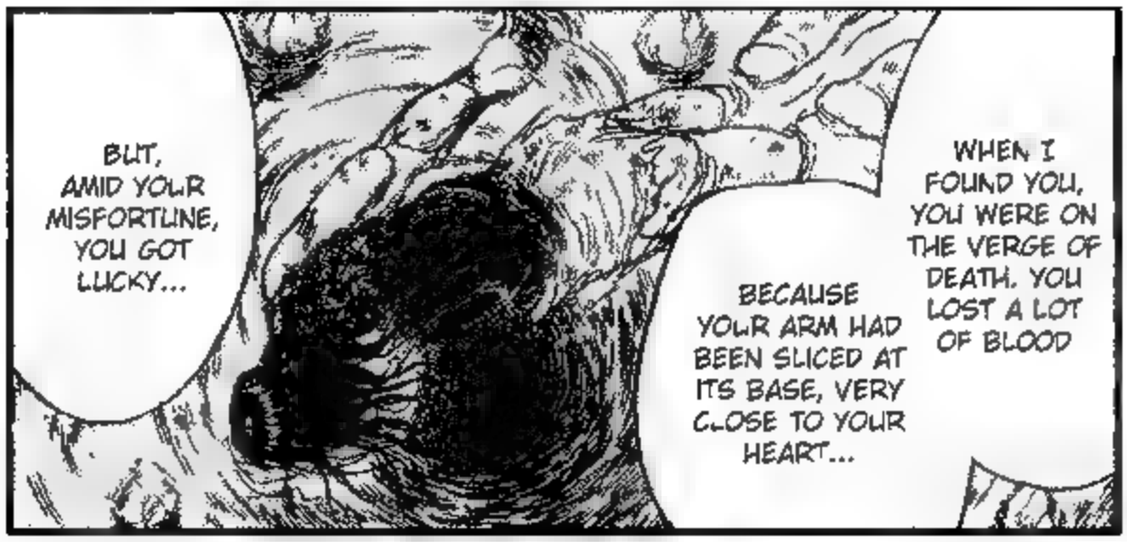

THAT COULD HEAL EVERY DISEASE AND GIVE LIFE TO INORGANIC THINGS
AND STILL OTHERS
HAVE TRIED TO CREATE A PERFECT ELIXIR...

THAT ELIXIR IS... THE AQUA VITAE!

I DIDN'T COME WITH YOU TO HEAR THIS KIND OF FOOLISH NONSENSE. SOME FREAKING TALE CLOSER TO SCIENCE FICTION THAN REALITY!
SCRATCH

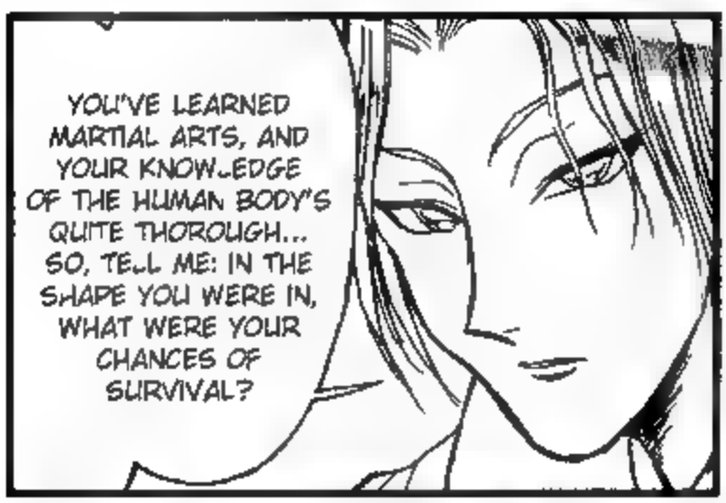

FORGIVE ME, GUY... BUT...
SCRATCH
SCRATCH

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I'M TRYING TO TELL YOU, MORON! THERE'S AQUA VITAE FLOWING IN YOUR VEINS!!
...I JUST WANNA KNOW WHY AND HOW I LOST MY ARM!!


BUT, AMID YOUR MISFORTUNE, YOU GOT LUCKY...
BECAUSE YOUR ARM HAD BEEN SLICED AT ITS BASE, VERY CLOSE TO YOUR HEART...
WHEN I FOUND YOU, YOU WERE ON THE VERGE OF DEATH. YOU LOST A LOT OF BLOOD

VHHH...
...
HUH ?!

I MANAGED TO POUR THE AQUA VITAE I HAD LEFT IN YOUR WOUNDED BODY.
I KNEW THAT TIME WAS AGAINST ME. IT WAS A RISKY BET...
WHILE IN THIS LOW TEMPERATURE, YOUR MUSCLES AND BLOOD VESSELS REMAINED STIFF, WHICH PREVENTED YOU FROM LOSING YOUR BLOOD TOO FAST.
...YOU FELL INTO COLD, PURE WATER.

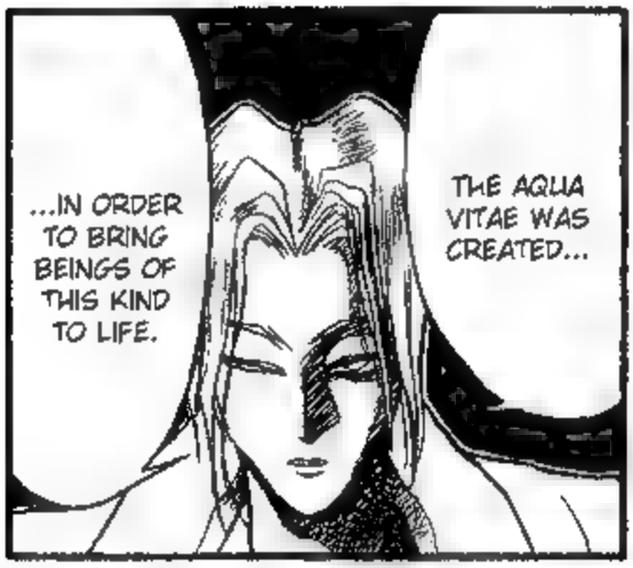

YOU'VE LEARNED MARTIAL ARTS, AND YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE HUMAN BODY'S QUITE THOROUGH... SO, TELL ME: IN THE SHAPE YOU WERE IN, WHAT WERE YOUR CHANCES OF SURVIVAL?

HOW COME YOU'RE STILL ALIVE, THEN?
THAT'S... IMPOS-SIBLE...

AND THAT WEIRD THING SAVED ME?!
...I WAS ALMOST DEAD...
YOU'RE SAYING THAT...

GLOTCH
GLITCH
-- Deuce --
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
TAC
HOP
HAA...
HA... I SEE...
IT'S TRUE THAT I'VE ALWAYS HAD A FEELING THIS ARM WAS A PART OF MY OWN BODY.
...YOUR ARTIFICIAL ARM'S WORKING AS IF IT HAD REAL NERVES.
THANKS TO THE AQUA VITAE, WHICH ENABLES THE CONNECTION WITH YOUR BODY...
IN THE 18TH CENTURY, AN ALCHEMIST TRIED...
...TO CREATE WITH HIS OWN HANDS A BEING THAT WOULD LIVE FOR-EVER.
EMPTY
BUT TODAY, THERE'S NOT EVEN A SINGLE DROP LEFT.
THIS WELL USED TO BE...
...FULL OF AQUA VITAE.

REALLY?
"A BEING THAT WOULD LIVE FOR-EVER"?
ONE THAT WOULDN'T GET OLD,
WOULDN'T LOSE IT'S STENGTH,


THE AQUA VITAE WAS CREATED...
...IN ORDER TO BRING BEINGS OF THIS KIND TO LIFE.

WOULD NEVER GET HURT,
WOULD FEEL NO PAIN
OR ANY OTHER FEELING,
AND WOULD NEVER DIE.

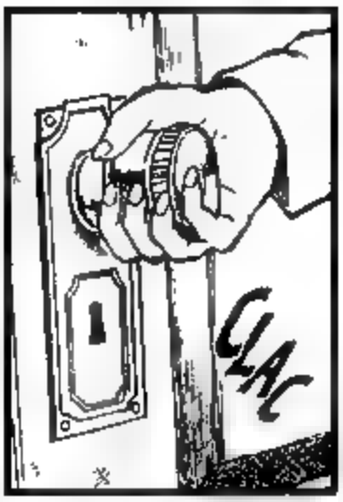
BUT, GUY... SUCH BEINGS... DON'T EXIST.
THESE CREATURES ARE CALLED... THE "ALITOMATONS."

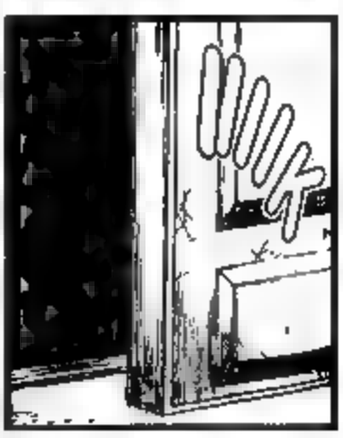
HA.. I SEE...
YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT "THAT."

WHHH...
COME WITH ME, NARUMI...

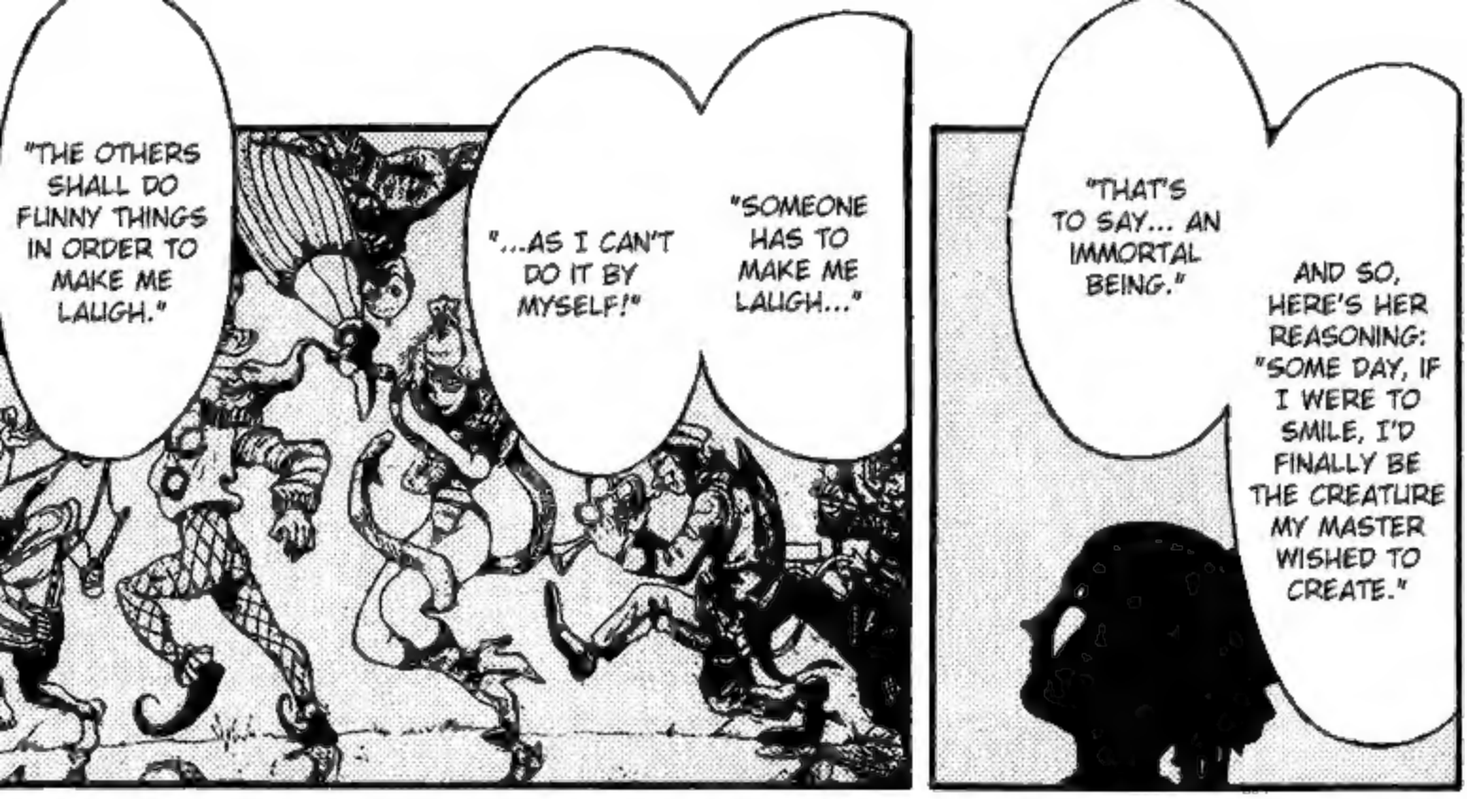
...WHICH WAS LATER CALLED FRANCINE. THIS ALITOMATON BECAME...
WHILE HE WAS GETTING CLOSER TO THE END OF HIS LIFE, THE ALCHEMIST EXPERIMENTED ON THE EFFECTS OF THE AQUA VITAE FOR THE FIRST TIME ON A PUPPET...

...AN ALITHENTIC WOMAN...
.. AS REAL AS YOU AND ME.


CLAC

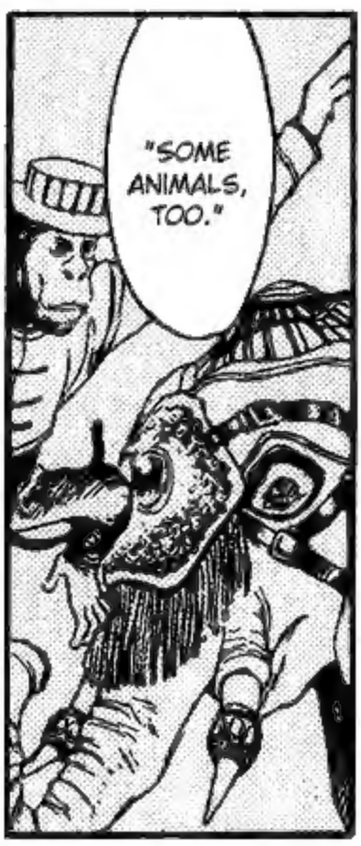


HM?
...HER CREATOR HAD MADE A MISTAKE.
IT WAS SINISTER!
BUT ACTUALLY ...
TAN
SHE WAS ABLE TO THINK AND TALK BY HERSELF,
AND SHE BEHAVED LIKE A LADY.
FRANCINE COULDN'T LAUGH OR EVEN SMILE!
THE AQUA VITAE, AS ULTIMATE AND PERFECT AS IT MIGHT BE, COULDN'T TRANSFORM AN AUTOMATON INTO A HUMAN BEING AS ALIVE AS OTHER HUMANS.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THEREFORE, FRANCINE STARTED TO THINK...
SHE COULD MIMIC EVERY OTHER FEELING WITH HER FACE, BUT NO SMILE HAD EVER SHINED ON HER LIPS.

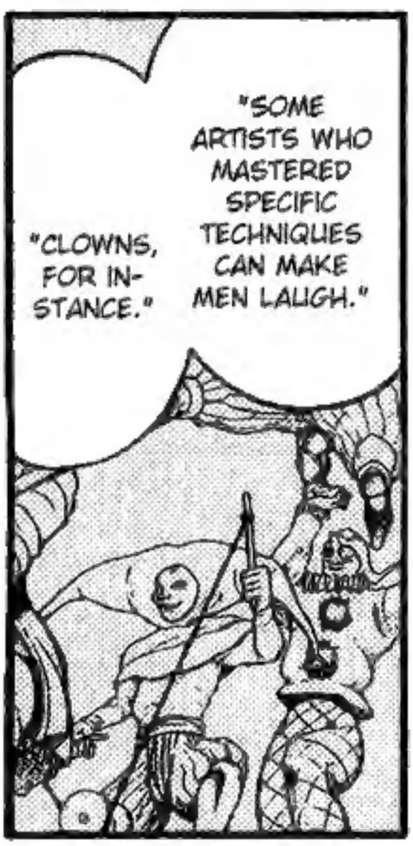

"THE OTHERS SHALL DO FUNNY THINGS IN ORDER TO MAKE ME LAUGH."
"...AS I CAN'T DO IT BY MYSELF!"
"SOMEONE HAS TO MAKE ME LAUGH..."

"THAT'S TO SAY... AN IMMORTAL BEING."
AND SO, HERE'S HER REASONING: "SOME DAY, IF I WERE TO SMILE, I'D FINALLY BE THE CREATURE MY MASTER WISHED TO CREATE."

FRANCINE THEN STARTED HER OWN RESEARCH ON ALCHEMY...
...IN ORDER TO CREATE OTHER BEINGS SUCH AS HERSELF.


"SOME ANIMALS, TOO."

"OR BRASS BANDS THAT PLAY ENTERTAINING MELODIES."


"CLOWNS, FOR IN-STANCE."
"SOME ARTISTS WHO MASTERED SPECIFIC TECHNIQUES CAN MAKE MEN LAUGH."

NEVERTHELESS, SHE CREATED SOME SPECIAL CORPOREAL FLUIDS, WHICH WERE OF LOW-GRADE QUALITY...
...TO INSUF-FLATE LIFE INTO HER AUTOMA-TONS.
OF COURSE, SHE DIDN'T HAVE ANY MORE OF THE AQUA VITAE HER CREATOR USED TO GIVE HER LIFE.

BY LEADING A WEIRD CIRCUS ... THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.
NO... SHE'S STILL LOOKING FOR A WAY...
AND ... DID FRANCINE MANAGE TO LAUGH WITH THE HELP OF HER AUTOMATONS?
A WAY TO TRANSFORM HERSELF... OR RATHER TO TRANSFORM ALL THE AUTOMATONS INTO REAL HUMANS.
TAN TAN
WHAT'S SHE... ... LOOKING FOR?
YEAH! OKAY, OKAY! I GOT IT!
WEIRD?!... YOU BETTER APOLOGIZE TO MY DEAR OLYMPIA RIGHT NOW!!
GHHHHH
... AND ...
BY USING SOME WEIRD PUPPETS, AREN'T THEY?
...ACCORDING TO WHAT YOU TOLD ME, HUMANS CALLED SHIROGANE ARE SUPPOSED TO DESTROY ALL THE AUTOMATONS...
GLOUPS

GUY, YOU MUST FORGET ABOUT THESE AUTOMATONS!
IF THEY TRIED TO KILL ME THE OTHER DAY, IT'D BE BECAUSE YOU WERE CHASING THEM, RIGHT?
WHO ASSIGNED THAT MISSION TO THE SHIROGANE?
What a strange guy!
...
IT'S HERE.
I DON'T THINK THEY'D BE ABLE TO ATTACK HUMANS...
WE'RE TOO LATE!
I'M GOING TO INTRODUCE YOU TO SOME PEOPLE WHO'LL MAKE THINGS CLEARER ABOUT THAT.
YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE ME IF I WERE TO EXPLAIN EVERYTHING MYSELF...
HMM?
TO
TO
THREE SHIROGANE ...
THEY'RE PRETTY MUCH THE TEACHERS OF ALL THE SHIROGANE.
WHO'S IN THERE?
CLAC

GUY,
I KIDNAPPED ONE
OF THE OLDIES.
I'LL KILL YOU
IN CARNAC.
FLAVIO

THEY ARE TOO THIRSTY FOR HUMAN BLOOD!

YOU'RE ASKING ME TO FORGET ABOUT THE AUTOMA-TONS...
...BUT THAT'S IMPOS-SIBLE.
GUY,
I KIDNAPPED O
OF THE OLDIE
I'LL KILL YOU
IN CARNAC.
FLAVIO